Mark Georges

The Hunger Games

The Hunger Games is a young adult fiction novel written by Suzanne Collins. It is set in the future in North America, a territory previously known as the United States of America. It takes place in a time following the end of a rebellion. The country has been split up into thirteen distinct districts, each with their own contributions to the good of the country. These are very hard times for the districts, and the Hunger Games add to the suffering.

The country is ruled by the Capitol, a place with all of the political power, all of the influence, and most of the wealth. Most of the outlying districts are starving, and families are doing their very best just to survive. As a result of the rebellion, each district every year must provide two tributes, one boy and one girl age 12-18 to compete in the Hunger Games. Some districts have volunteers; others draw names in a lottery. Either way, the tributes are sent to the Capitol city where they are trained, well fed, paraded around in front of the citizens, and then sent to fight to the death in a sadistic battlefield under the control of the Gamemakers.

The book follows Katniss Everdeen from the 12th district. Katniss lives with her mother and sister, Primrose. She struggles to keep her family alive, since her father’s death, by hunting and bartering for food and other necessities. When Primrose, who is 12, is selected to participate in the Hunger Games, Katniss volunteers to keep her sister alive. Katniss and Peeta Mellark, the baker’s son who had helped Katniss by giving her bread, are taken to the Capitol and prepared for the games.

The Hunger Games don’t disappoint, living up to their bloody and barbaric nature. The tributes fight and kill each other, some forming temporary alliances, others on their own hiding for survival. Peeta and Katniss are able to stay alive long enough for the Gamemakers to announce a change in rules; they will allow two victors provided they are both from the same district. Peeta and Katniss work together and make it to the end. The Gamemakers change the rule yet again and say that there can only be one victor. In an effort to keep the Gamemakers from having a victor, Peeta and Katniss plan to kill themselves by ingesting poison berries. Just as they are about to take the poison, they are both declared the victors from District 12.

This novel has a great story. It is very engaging and appeals to both adults and young adults. It is very easy for intermediate readers to read, and provides many opportunities for lessons and activities. It deals with some adult themes, loss, violence, hypocrisy, death, murder, and survival, but handles the material in such a way that it makes it accessible to younger readers. I would recommend this book for readers 12 to 18 and beyond. I think that teachers could easily incorporate this book into their libraries, and lesson plans.

The Hunger Games—SRE Plan

Day One/Day Two: Introduction to The Hunger Games Chapters 1-3

Pre-reading Activities:

* Motivating—Divide the class into 5-6 equal groups. Let the class know that they are on a sinking ship and that there are only enough seats on the lifeboat for one person per group. Have the group deliberate and choose one person to fill that seat. (Discuss how they felt, how they came to their decisions, and how they feel about the final decisions made by the group.
* Pre-teaching Concepts—The Hunger Games includes some fairly adult concepts that may need to be discussed prior to reading. Talk about loss, death, survival, morals, and friendships to lay the groundwork for students to understand the depth of the novel.

During Reading Activities:

* Reading to Students—To introduce the book and to help get them started, Teacher will read the first chapter to the students while they follow along in their own books. Have students highlight any parts they may have questions with, for later discussion.
* Silent Reading—Allow students to read the second chapter, again highlighting any questions they may have.

Post Reading Activities:

* Discussion—Discuss the first two chapters answering any questions the students may have highlighted.
* Questioning—Question the students on what they read making sure they have comprehended what they have read.
* Differentiation—Work with any students who are struggling with comprehension through group reading/tutorials.

Day Three/Four: Preparing for the Games: Chapters 4-9

Pre-reading Activity:

* Relating the Reading to Students’ Lives—Discuss the preparation needed to participate in the Hunger Games, highlighting building on the strengths of the tributes. Give the students time to think about and list what strengths they have that might help them survive. What makes them successful in sports, school, and life?

During-reading Activities:

* Supported Reading—Suggest students focus on the preparations that the tributes are making including emotional preparations. (Katniss withdrawing from Peeta, etc.)
* Silent Reading—Have students read the chapters on their own at home. Have them re-read the chapters with the supported reading activity mentioned above.
* Differentiation—Set aside tutorial time to group read with students that may be struggling with the text opening it up for questioning if needed.

Post Reading Activities:

* Writing—Have students write a journal with at least 4 entries describing their experiences as if they were characters in the book. What was being selected like? How did I feel on the train ride? How did the preparations make them feel? How was training going? ETC…
* Artistic, graphic, and non-verbal activities—Have students draw a representation of how they would like to be presented in the opening ceremonies. Students need to be able to present their representations and discuss why they chose the elements they have chosen for their presentation.

Day Five-Ten: Chapters 10-27

Pre-reading Activities:

* Pre-questioning/Predicting/Setting Direction—Discuss the story with students allowing them to make predictions about what is about to happen. Take a vote listing the top three predictions on the board for the duration of the book.
* Suggesting Literary Lenses—Just as each reader interprets the material differently, assume that you, the student, are one of the other tributes from another district. How do you think they view the games? Discuss the different viewpoints from the various districts/characters.

During Reading Activities:

* Traditional study activities—Have students highlight, make notes, and annotate areas that help them understand the text. We will discuss in class with the students talking about their notes, and how they helped them.
* Modifying Text—For differentiation, provide a couple of classroom audio books for students having trouble reading the material.
* Silent Reading—Have students read the material at home discussing the chapters in class as they go. Provide some time in class for silent reading and discussion as available.

Post Reading Activities:

* Building Connections—Discuss how the competitions in the Hunger Games and the struggles the tributes have faced compare with every day obstacles we face in life. (Sports, School, Careers)
* Re-teaching—Re-teach any concepts necessary during class discussions to make sure all students comprehend the material. Work with students as necessary for differentiation.